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THE TURKISH COMPASSIONATE FUND. BY MRS. OLIVER BELL BUNCE.

WHEN one considers the horrors of war, and the sufferings which take place together with cruelties perpetrated on account of it, one fails to understand how a courage can be maintained after it is over, and how any line of work can be adopted in which by patient toil and unceasing industry a means of livelihood is reached, under these heart-breaking situations. The story which follows is really the history of the Turkish Compassionate Fund, as pathetic a tale as ever was told.

The Turkish Compassionate Fund was established by the Baroness Burdett Coutts—that worthy and charming woman—in the winter of 1877-'78, as a relief fund for the Mohammedans, victims of the Turko-Russian war, who, on their journey, experienced the most cruel of hardships in hopes of reaching the great city of Constantinople where succor might be obtained from the Sultan to alleviate their distress.

No sooner had Logia fallen than the enemy crossed the Balkans, and made a frightful onslaught, so that Mohammedans, Jews, and even Christians fled in a panic, some on foot, if they found no other means of transport, and some were doomed to be packed in trucks for twenty or thirty hours without food, and but lightly clothed. The weather was extreme, the snow deep, the cold intense, so that many died in their vain attempt to reach the capital. Among these were old men, feeble women and little children. Perhaps the history of this dreadful time has never been written in all its horrible detail, although enough has been said to make for these workers of the needle a sympathy that would last forever. An eyewitness describes the road outside of Philopolis and Adrianople as "literally lined with the dead bodies of Turkish men, women and children." Women became mothers on this perilous march, some went mad, and others in their frenzy ended the trials of their little ones by throwing them as they passed, into the river Maritz, trusting the waters would close over their feeble and wasted bodies forever rather than prolong their sufferings on that dreadful journey.

At last, the British public became aroused, and by the combined efforts of Sir Henry Layard, who was Ambassador to Constantinople, and his wife Lady Layard, a relief fund was started by the Baroness Burdett Coutts, and commissioned by Mr. Ashmead Bartlett with Sir Francis Winton, the African explorer. Succor was carried into the localities, and by that means thousands of lives were saved in that terrible disaster, so that the Turkish Fund was at last established as a gigantic charity, and making for the women of that country an industry that has never been excelled at any time in decorative art.

But with all this great fund started, it is to Mrs. Arthur Hauson alone, an English lady of high social prestige and intellectual standing, that this industry should be credited. She was the first who discovered this extraordinary talent of the Mohammedan women for needlework of a phenomenal character. Mrs. Hauson was their friend from the beginning, working among them, giving her time, her energies, and her money, encouraging them at every step in their career to support themselves. And so laudable was her purpose that, becoming a saint in their eyes, they kissed the hem of her garment with adorable worship. Mrs. Hauson pretty soon learned that these women of great personal beauty and magnificent physique asked only for work, but not alms, preferring to toil rather than to live on anyone's bounty. Some, of course, returned to their homes after the cruel war was over. Others followed their husbands, sons or brothers in different callings, while many remained—homeless but hopeful. Some of these women were ladies whose lives had been of ease and comfort, and when fleeing from home they had gathered together some rare and old embroideries saved from the wreck, specimens of their wonderful needlework in all their fineness and beauty. Every article of clothing that they wore, although torn and dilapidated, was daintily made and often finished knee-deep in the finest of drawn-work. Many of them had been handed down from generation to generation, and of course were of precious and priceless value. After hundreds had been helped and the Fund had proved a savior, Mrs. Hauson,



MADAME ZACAROFF, OF THE
TURKISH FUND.

with almost the last fifty pounds, bought materials to begin the work. On certain days she would have them go in a body to her country house and there distribute piece by piece to young women, little children, grown women, aged grandmothers, seventy and seventy-five years of age—women of all ranks; punctually all were there. But, the means being a small one, their good and generous friend would place them indiscriminately in a row giving a piece to every tenth. Those who got it went away happy, while those who were left out hoped for better luck another time.

The work grew, not in great elaborate pieces, but in small affairs, such as doilies, which were made by children by the hundreds; any fancy article of small dimensions. Some English ladies interested in the scheme gave numerous orders, and sent materials for disposal and sale. Among the foremost as a co-laborer with Mrs. Hauson was Lady Charlotte Scheweter. Orders flowed in, and hundreds of busy women turned in the work—"so that thousands of pounds rolled over and

ecution and coloring, and then good Mrs. Hauson with fresh energy labored hard to carry out the great ideas suggested by the French decorators, who declared "nothing was impossible by those whose eyes could count threads in a cobweb and fingers that could work gold in a butterfly's wing." So that the Turkish Compassionate Fund underwent another marvelous change, and hope was again restored. From one firm, ball dresses were ordered, dreams of beauty on crêpe-de-chine and mousseline de soie.

But, like all artistic combinations where the real is as precious as jewels, of course an imitation had to be made—the machine became its enemy. Those copied looked somewhat like the originals and of course could be had at a cheaper price, and to people of inartistic taste these copies served just as well as the beautiful originals. And no sooner were these exquisite embroideries made a special ornamentation for dresses, bonnets, wraps, cloaks, and the like, than a lighter and poorer value was produced of a similar pattern at half its cost. Yet,



A GROUP OF TURKISH WOMEN
AND CHILDREN.

over again." So that the object of this great charity was realized—work for those who could do, and comforts for the sick, aged and infirm.

But, like all organizations in which charity has its lead, the newness wore off, and other distresses coming to the front, the interest began to abate. Much had been sold, and purchasers had been most generous. But even they wearied at last of the same designs and patterns, and so a large part of these beautiful embroideries remained on Mrs. Hauson's hands.

Then the "Fund" began to struggle. Matters grew worse, the times more deplorable, and so bad became the situation that it was decided to close up affairs and save whatever money was left for those who needed it.

So Madame Zacaroff, a French lady of high birth and charming attainments, took the cause in hand, and firmly placed it for a time in the gay capital of Paris. The embroideries were shown to the best French artists, who admired the work greatly and marveled at the ex-

with all these drawbacks Madame Zacaroff asserts that the work done in Paris was on the whole a great benefit. That the improvement began when this work was done on the best selected materials that could be purchased, and that from the "pani" or Turkish cotton to those creations on exquisite satin a more proficient skill in needlework has developed what is now called the *New Art*, which alone belongs to and is the sole property of the Turkish Compassionate Fund.

Madame Zacaroff having fully enlisted in the cause resolved that this noble charity and its priceless gems of art should cross the Atlantic and so some years ago an agency was established in the hope that if a room was secured on a principal street a show might be made that would attract the public, and procure for these poor exiles the sympathy and patronage of the American women.

At first, a room high up in a building was rented, and by the advice of an American gentleman a small shop

opened for these "treasures of beauty," Madame Zacaroff taking charge of it herself. Then a place on the first floor was taken, so the steps would not be a detriment to those who could not climb such a distance. So to see these wonderful examples of needle craft, one must visit the "Fund," which has settled itself comfortably at 8 East 30th Street, and will receive all politeness through the courtesy of Mrs. Ellen Lawton, the able assistant of Madame Zacaroff in this country, who will show these priceless treasures to anyone for the sake of the "Fund." As one looks on these beautiful embroideries the wonder presents itself how such perfect workmanship can be done. Every conceivable design is made for the ornamentation of articles which if bought will not only last for years, but serve as a legacy to a family after the owners have passed away.

Your attention is called to a superb bed set made of mousseline de soie, in which there is a magnificent border and centre adornment of conventionalized flowers in a flowing design of tints that are so pure in style, so mellow in tones, so soft and melting to the eye that it becomes a work of art. No glaring device is used in any one piece, the whole artistic, and beautiful in the extreme.

There are tablecloths worked in the most Oriental of ways, the patterns so superb in rich colors, that the wonder is how one pair of hands could have accomplished so much. Exquisite little doilies in white and gold made by the children who have industriously given all their time, until they have reached the number hundreds. Many of the larger pieces are finished with lace so fitted that there is not a gather or pleat. Of smaller articles there are charming candle screens, in which there are small flowers so exquisitely worked that there is no difference on either side. Around the edge is a Honiton lace fitted so that the whole scheme is in one perfectly plain piece. For photographs this same embroidery acts as an inside mat—and in many cases a frame. If green is depicted then every shade is charmingly brought out, the whole perfect in every detail. There are covers for bureaux, collation stands, pincushions. In satins of all shades, from the darkest to the lightest, there are curtains, portières, sash draperies, of magnificent treatment in heavy gold thread combined with brilliant hues of floral decoration with elaborate border. Centrepieces picked out in the same glittering mass and so beautiful in design that one marvels at the price. To accompany

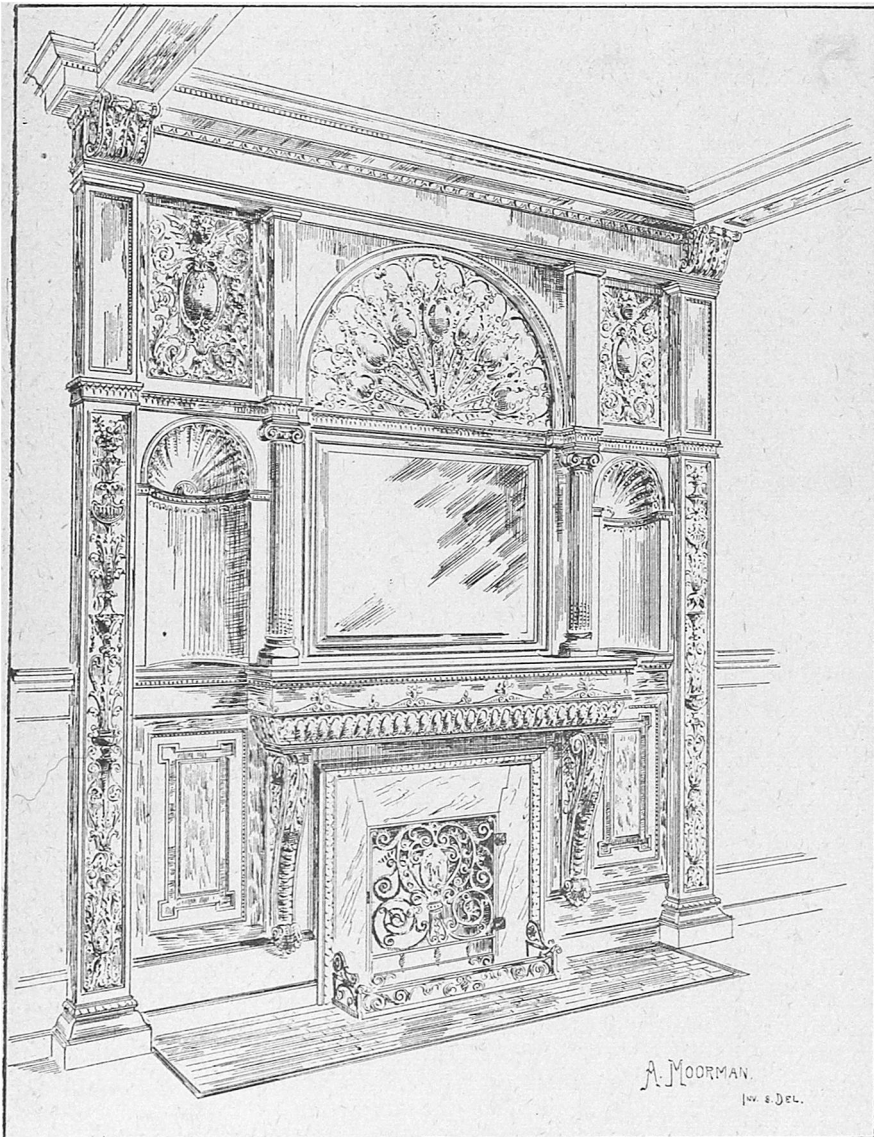
these are pillows of the same tints in a superb pattern of outlined gilt and made up in first-class style, so perfect in all its arrangements that not a flaw can be detected—head rests in delicate silks and of thinner materials that as an accessory nothing can be more artistic.

The number of pieces of needlework sent in are exactly the same on both sides, and as each woman can finish only a certain number of pieces in a year, it naturally takes many workers to be employed so that a profit will be realized.

An old lady was a pauper of the "Fund" for thirteen years. Although never idle, all her wants were attended to and wishes granted. It was said by the other women-workers that she had been so rich in her own country that her house was full of silver and gold. But not long ago a bit of luck came to the dear old soul, and her rights were restored and she left Constantinople to live again in the home she so sacredly cherished.

And so now in this country the Turkish Compassionate Fund has become one of the great points in decorative art, a centre for splendid affairs in satin, silks and all the lighter materials that go to make up accessories more beautiful than can be imagined for a home, every one of which can be seen every day in the year. It is a great industry in which charity is its chief promoter, and with two great spirits that steer the helm—Mrs. Arthur Hauson and Madame Zacaroff—who are untiring in their behalf for these poor needlewomen of the East.

Many of you who have read this pitiful tale—says good Madame Zacaroff—when the occasion offers and you are a visitor in Constantinople, go and see Mrs. Hauson, who is living in the village of Candella, on the Asiatic coast of the Bosphorus, and be present on her reception days, when the work is given out, the silk and gold weighed, and the design and coloring of each piece explained, words of encouragement given, medicine for a sick child, and a reward for a good but difficult piece of work. Pay a call to Mrs. Hauson and her lovely daughters, whose language is a mixture of English, French, Greek and Turkish, a veritable Volapuc, unintelligible to the outsider.



A RENAISSANCE MANTELPIECE. DESIGNED
AND DRAWN BY A. MOORMAN.